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# Farm Broadcasters Letter



Letter No. 2376

August 18, 1988

## FEED OUTLOOK PER ACRE

Widespread drought coupled with above normal temperatures resulted in an estimated record decline in corn yields from the preceding year. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the national average yield is estimated at 78.5 bushels per acre, 34 percent under last year's yield of 119.4. Barley, oats and sorghum also suffered from the dry, hot weather but with lesser impact on yields. The estimated barley yield is 38.9 bushels per acre, down 26 percent... oats, 38.4 bushels per acre, down 29 percent...and sorghum, 38.4 bushels, down 11 percent.

## FEED OUTLOOK IN TONS

The production of feed grains in 1988 is estimated at 137.3 million metric tons and only 900,000 tons above 1983 production, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This year's corn crop was estimated at slightly under 4.5 billion bushels, 3.6 billion below last year's harvest. The sorghum crop is estimated at 561 million bushels, down 180 million from 1987. Barley production for 1988 is projected at 288 million bushels, a 45-percent decline from 1987, and the oats crop is estimated at 206 million bushels, down 45 percent from last year's harvest of 374 million. This year's oats crop is the smallest on record.

## GLOBAL SUPPLIES OF COARSE GRAIN

The global supplies of coarse grains are expected to be relatively large in 1988/89 despite drought-reduced crops in the United States and Canada, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Foreign production is forecast up 1 percent over 1987/88 to a near-record 580 million tons, which combined with large carryin stocks, should ensure that there is no world shortfall. However, the ratio of world ending stocks to use is projected to decline to 15.9 percent, the lowest since 1983/84. Most of the anticipated drawdown is stocks will occur in the U.S.

## DECLINE IN WORLD FOOD SUPPLIES

The decline in world food supplies will continue in 1988/89, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. With global cereal consumption exceeding production, world cereal stocks at the end of 1988/89 are expected to fall 37 percent below the record of 2 years earlier. The drop in production and stocks is concentrated in North America, where drought is sharply reducing 1988/89 output in the U.S. and Canada. Supplies of food grains on world markets are tight, but should be adequate to meet 1988/89 requirements. World market prices of wheat and coarse grains are sharply higher. Higher international grain prices have reduced the capacity of all countries to import food commercially.

LAST GAP ON  
DROUGHT AID

Farmers Home Administration emergency loans are already in about a dozen states, but the loans should be considered the last step in drought recovery assistance, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Although the drought bill signed by the President removes crop insurance as a requirement for loan eligibility, the FmHA emergency loans will still fill the last gap, rather than the first, in drought assistance. According to Vance Clark, FmHA Administrator, the agency will not process emergency loan applications until disaster-related payments authorized in the drought bill have been paid by USDA's ASCS and claims for federal crop insurance have been satisfied. There will be the emergency loan program for farmers who will not receive any disaster assistance from other sources.

RETAIL MEAT  
PRICES TO

Retail prices for Choice beef may rise only 1 to 3 percent in 1989, following this year's 3 to 4 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Pork prices may increase about 3 to 4 percent in 1989, after declining 3 percent in 1988. Wholesale broiler prices may remain near 1988's 54 cents as the larger supplies are offset by strong fast food demand and lower beef supplies. A slowing in turkey production increases and smaller cold storage stock could raise wholesale turkey prices to 68 to 74 cents a pound. Reduced egg supplies in 1989 could push wholesale egg prices into the 70's, compared with 63 cents a dozen in 1988.

WORLD OILSEED  
PRODUCTION  
DOWN

The world oilseed production is forecast at 202.2 million tons, down 2 percent from last month and the 1987/88 level, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Lower production of soybeans in the U.S. and China because of drought-reduced yields account for most of the decline. Partially offsetting the reductions from last month are a projected 500,000-ton increase in Brazilian soybean production, substantial improvement in prospects for India's peanut crop and a 403,000-ton rise in U.S. cottonseed output.

CATTLE ON  
FEED IN  
7 STATES

Cattle and calves on feed August 1, 1988 for slaughter market in the 7 States preparing monthly estimates totaled 6.84 million head, up 2 percent from a year ago and up 8 percent from August 1, 1986, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The 7 states are: Arizona, California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and Texas. Marketings of fed cattle during July totaled 1.77 million, up 4 percent from both last year and 1986. This is the largest number of fed marketings in July since 7 State estimates began in 1972.

ROACHES TO  
STAY AT USDA

Contrary to what you may have heard, research on how to kill the Asian cockroach is continuing in a U.S. Department of Agriculture laboratory. The research budget for next year calls for \$243,700 to be spent on cockroaches, including the Asian cockroach that arrived in Florida two years ago. So far, the researchers have come up with a bait that killed almost 100 percent of the roaches. Now they're considering the potential use of biological controls, using one organism to kill another. Researchers went to Asia in May looking for natural enemies of the pest.

MORE FARMERS  
THAN FIGURES  
SHOW

The number of people living on farms was down to 4,986,000 in 1987, making up 2 percent of the Nation's population. But...these figures count only the people actually living on farms in rural areas. But 20 percent or more of farmers do not live on their farms, and aren't counted in the farm population figures. Neither are farm workers counted as farm population unless they live on a farm, and about 80 percent of "farm workers for pay" don't live on farms. This "farm related" population is probably double the farm population living on farms. The U.S. Department of Agriculture will have new figures in this area late this year.

FROM OUR RADIO  
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1629...(Weekly 13 1/2 min documentary) With the number of elderly people growing at an unprecedeted rate in this country, the role of care for the aged is becoming more important than ever. Brenda Curtis talks with experts about the factors involved in deciding whether to care for ailing elderly people at home or in a nursing home.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1617...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Lethal crystals; Dairy surplus under control?; A successful brucellosis eradication program.

CONSUMER TIME #1109...(Weekly reel of 2 1/2-3 min features) Exploding fruit!; Home equity loans; caring for the elderly at home; Rural Americans heading for the city; Buying back-to-school clothes.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Aug. 24, Wed, Dairy outlook, Poultry production; Thurs, Aug. 25, Export outlook, World tobacco situation; Mon. Aug. 29, Cotton and wool outlook; Tues, Aug. 30, Crop/Weather update, Farm income and finance outlook; Ag prices report; Wed, Aug. 31, Vegetable outlook. Fri, Sept. 2, Dairy products.

TELEVISION SERVICE program, A BETTER WAY, DOWN TO EARTH, AGRICULTURAL UPDATE and SATELLITE NEWS are available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8 as follows:

Thursdays....AG UPDATE/SATELLITE NEWS, 7:30-7:45 p.m. ET....Transponder 12D

Saturdays....A BETTER WAY, 10:00-10:30 a.m. ET.....Transponder 10D  
ORIGINAL DOWN TO EARTH, 10:30-11:00 a.m. ET.....Transponder 10D  
UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET.....Transponder 10D

Mondays.....A BETTER WAY, 8:00-8:30 a.m. ET.....Transponder 12D  
REPEAT DOWN TO EARTH, 8:30-9:00 a.m. ET....Transponder 12D  
UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 9:00-9:15 a.m. ET.....Transponder 12D

A BETTER WAY is also available on The Learning Channel, SATCOM 3R, Transponder 2, Audio 6.8 on Thursday at 10:30 a.m. ET.

OFF MIKE

The 1988 Fact Book of Agriculture is off the press. If you want a free copy, just call or write to this office...Former Sec'y of Ag. John R. Block, now president of the National-American Wholesale Grocers' Assoc., has been named Trustee of Bradley Univ. in Peoria, Ill....Kathleen Lonergan, KMA, Shenandoah, Ia., wrote to Gary Crawford to congratulate USDA Radio on the "stellar" coverage of the Crop Quality Conference, the daily crop weather update, and the Communicators' Conference. Thanks, Kathleen. She also mentions that Flash the pig and Jake the dog have befriended a nest of robins blown out of a tree...And now, the news you've been waiting for...USDA R&TV has a new Chief...Vic Powell. And believe it or not, he's an ex-farmer. He lived and worked on the family farm in West Jefferson, Ohio. He saw military service during the Korean War. He's a graduate of Marietta College, Ohio.

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Vic was a news staff member at several radio and TV stations in Ohio, W. Virginia and Virginia. He was Press Assistant to Congressman William Whitehurst of Virginia. He served in senior executive management positions at national associations headquartered in Wash., D.C., including the Air Force Assoc., and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Assoc. He was a member of the senior staff at the Agriculture Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. For the past several years, he's been director of the USDA's TV News Service...and starting August 22, Chief, USDA R&TV.

*Margaret T. Desatnik*  
MARGARET T. DESATNIK, Acting Chief  
Radio and Television Division